

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 ISO-00 SAM-01 IO-10 OMB-01 AID-05

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3682

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

USLO PEKING

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0756

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI PINT AO

SUBJECT: ANALYSIS OF THE RECENT ANGOLAN FIGHTING

CINCLANT AND CINCEUR FOR POLAD'S

1. SUMMARY. BOTH FNLA AND MPLA CAN CLAIM MILITARY SUCCESS DURING THE RECENT BATTLES, BUT ON BALANCE MPLA EMERGED IN A BETTER TACTICAL POSITION THAN FNLA. NEITHER IMPROVED THEIR POLITICAL POSITION SINCE THE SWING GROUP, UNITA, STILL DECLINES TO JOIN EITHER. END SUMMARY.

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2. AFTER 13 DAYS OF CONSTANT WARFARE THAT AFFECTED EVERY TOWN

AND CITY IN NORTHERN ANGOLA, THE MOVEMENTS' ARMED FORCES HAVE SUCCEEDED IN TIDYING UP THE BATTLE MAP AND ASSERTING THEIR TERRITORIAL IMPERATIVE. A TRUE MILITARY FRONT NOW EXISTS BETWEEN MPLA AND FNLA, BEGINNING IN LUANDA AND EXTENDING TO CAXITO (13 DEGREES 40'E/8 DEGREES 40'S), QUITEXE (15 DEGREES 05'E/7 DEGREES 56'S), SAMBA CAJU (15 DEGREES 25'E/8 DEGREES 45'S), DUQUE DE BRAGANCA (15 DEGREES 58'E/9 DEGREES 15'S) AND MALANGE. THE FIRST AND LAST ARE STILL CONTESTED CITIES WITH ELEMENTS FROM BOTH LIBERATION ARMIES IN EACH. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SAN ANTONIO DO ZAIRE WHERE FNLA HAS WON BUT WHERE MPLA'S EVENTUAL STATUS IS UNCLEAR, FNLA HAS ABSOLUTE CONTROL OVER THE AREA NORTH OF THIS FRONT UP TO THE ZAIRE BORDER. SOUTH OF THE FRONT MPLA PREDOMINATES BUT FNLA HAS HUNG ON TO GARRISONS IN SALAZAR AND OUTSIDE OF THE CROSSROADS TOWN OF DONDO. SOUTH OF DONDO THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN THE POLITICAL/ MILITARY SITUATION WITH MULTIPLE PRESENCES IN ALL SIGNIFICANT SETTLEMENTS.

3. THE FRONT BASICALLY CORRESPONDS TO LINGUISTIC AND TRIBAL BOUNDARIES IN THE SECTOR FROM CAXITO TO QUITEXE. FROM QUITEXE TO MALANGE AND IN LUANDA, HOWEVER, FNLA TROOPS ARE OCCUPYING AREAS THAT ARE POPULATED BY KIMBUNDO-SPEAKING PEOPLE, MPLA'S PREDOMINANT LINGUISTIC GROUP. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF CABINDA, NO BAKONGO-SPEAKING AREA (FNLA'S ETHNIC GROUPS ARE HELD BY MPLA.

4. THE DELINEATION OF A FRONT AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DE FACTO PARTITION CAN BE TRACED TO THE HEAVY FIGHTING IN LUANDA ON APRIL 28-MAY 1, WHEN, FOR THE FIRST TIME, A GROUP (MPLA) TRIED TO FORCE ANOTHER GROUP OUT OF A CERTAIN AREA, LUANDA ITSELF. FNLA RETALIATED ON MAY 2-3 BY EXPELLING MPLA FROM MOST OF ZAIRE DISTRICT. AFTER A FEW WEEKS LULL, MPLA ATTACKED FNLA THROUGHOUT THE DEMBOS ON MAY 28 AND PUSHED FNLA OUT. FNLA RETALIATED ON JUNE 1-2 BY ATTACKING MPLA POSITIONS IN CARMONA AND THE REST OF UIGE DISTRICT, FORCING MPLA'S RETREAT AND EVENTUAL EVACUATION. MPLA REPLIED BY KICKING FNLA OUT OF CABINDA CITY ON JUNE 3-4. FNLA HIT THE LAST MPLA GARRISON IN ZAIRE DISTRICT AT SA'ZAIRE ON JUNE 4, FORCING THEM TO FLEE. THE SCENE CAME FULL CIRCLE WITH THE GROUPS RECOMMENCING THE FIGHT IN LUANDA ON JUNE 5. FINALLY MPLA TRIED TO TAKE OVER A

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MAJOR FNLA BASE AT QUIFONDONGO, NEAR CAXITO, ON JUNE 9.

5. MAJOR FLASH POINTS REMAIN MALANGE, DONDO, CAXITO, AND LUANDA. OF THESE CAXITO IS THE KEY. WITHOUT IT FNLA CANNOT EASILY SUPPLY OR REINFORCE ITS LUANDA FORCES. IT HAS BEEN IN MPLA'S CONTROL FOR ALMOST TWO WEEKS NOW AND SEVERAL FNLA SOURCES HAVE TOLD US THEY MUST AND WILL TAKE IT BACK VERY SOON. MPLA NOW HAS ITS HANDS ON OR NEAR ALL OF LUANDA'S JUGULARS, WITH TROOPS NEAR THE

HYDROELECTRIC DAM OUTSIDE DONDO, THE WATER PUMPING STATION AND THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS STATION AT QUIFONDONGO, AND THE MAIN ARTERY FOR LUANDA'S FOOD, THE DONDO-LUANDA HIGHWAY. THESE MULTIPLE THREATS SERIOUSLY WORRY THE PORTUGUESE COMMAND BUT EXCEPT FOR HARRASSMENT OF TRAFFIC, MPLA HAS MADE NO OVERT MOVE TO OCCUPY THESE SITES.

6. WHILE THE MILITARY BALANCE IN LUANDA AND CUANZA NORTH DISTRICT CLEARLY SHIFTED TO MPLA, THERE WAS NO COMMENSURATE POLITICAL MOVEMENT. ONE THEORY FOR THE MAY 28-31 FIGHTING WAS THAT MPLA WANTED TO IMPRESS SAVIMBI WITH ITS MILITARY POWER IN ORDER TO PRESSURE HIM INTO JOINING MPLA AGAINST FNLA. IF SO, THIS MANEUVER FAILED. SAVIMBI IS PROVING TO BE AN EXPERT FENCE SITTER. HIS LOCAL COMMANDERS IN CARMONA AND LUANDA DID JOIN FNLA IN COLLECTIVE SELF-DEFENSE AGAINST MPLA ATTACKS, AND MPLA DID LAUNCH ASSAULTS AGAINST SEVERAL UNITA GARRISONS, KILLING 34 IN ONE ATTACK, BUT SAVIMBI REFUSES TO ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE PUSHED INTO A PUBLIC MILITARY ALLIANCE WITH FNLA. WE HAVE HEARD THAT HE WILL MAKE COMMON CAUSE WITH ROBERTO IN THE NAIROBI SUMMIT ON JUNE 15 AND ATTEMPT TO FORCE A MODERATE LINE UPON NETO BUT WE HAVE NO INDICATION THAT HE IS READY TO ABANDON HIS BASIC NEUTRALITY.
PORTER

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